GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
PLANNING
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:406
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VARIANCE IN POVERTY ESTIMATES
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Will the Minister of PLANNING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the poverty estimate of the Planning Commission for each State has always been at variance with the State list of beneficiaries;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the Government proposes to conduct a new survey to revise the poverty list;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) the norms/criteria followed by the Government for allocation of subsidized foodgrains and the basis on which the foodgrains are distributed by the States to the beneficiaries; and

(f) the corrective measures taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE FOR PLANNING, SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY AND EARTH SCIENCES (SHRI ASHWANI KUMAR)

(a) & (b): The Planning Commission estimates the number and proportion of persons living below the poverty line (BPL) for states as well as for the country as a whole by using a poverty line that is based on per capita monthly consumption expenditure. The estimates do not identify the beneficiaries for any specific programmes and/or schemes. However, the Ministry of Rural Development conducts the BPL Census through the State Governments and UTs to identify the rural households living Below the Poverty Line who could be assisted under its various programmes. These two estimates are, therefore, not comparable.

(c) & (d): The BPL Census to identify the rural households living Below the Poverty Line is generally conducted at the beginning of a Five Year Plan. The last BPL Census was conducted in 2002 based on the methodology of Score Based Ranking of rural households based on 13 socio- economic parameters. The methodology for identification of BPL families is reviewed from time to time. The Ministry of Rural Development, in August 2008, constituted Saxena Committee to recommend a suitable methodology for conducting next BPL Census for identification of rural households. Based on the Saxena Committee Report pilot studies were carried out and the new methodology for identification of BPL households in rural areas has been finalised.

The Planning Commission has constituted an Expert Group under the chairmanship of Prof. S.R. Hashim to recommend a suitable methodology for identification of BPL families in the urban areas. The Hashim Committee has submitted interim report recommending a questionnaire to be canvassed along with the caste enumeration to collect relevant information on socio-economic indicators in order to determine BPL status of urban households. Accordingly, A Socio-Economic and Caste Census has been launched on 29th June 2011in the country which would be carried out by the respective State/UT Governments with the financial and technical support of the Government of India. Socio-Economic and Caste Census consist of Census in rural areas for identification of BPL households in rural areas, Census in urban areas in connection with identification of BL households in urban areas and Caste Census throughout the country. As regards the poverty estimates, the Planning Commission is in the process of estimating the poverty ratio for the year 2009-10 on the basis of NSS (2009-10) data on Household Consumer Expenditure, which are now available. The estimates of poverty will be revised from time to time based on recommendations of experts.SS
(e) & (f): The norms/criteria followed by the Union Government for allocation of subsidized foodgrains and the basis on which the foodgrains are distributed by the States to the beneficiaries are revised from time to time. Presently, for allocation of foodgrains (wheat and rice) to States and Union Territories under Targeted Public Distribution System(TPDS), Department of Food and Public Distribution uses the number of Below Poverty Line (BPL) families based on 1993- 94 poverty estimates of Planning Commission and the population estimates of Registrar General of India as on 1st March 2001 or the number of such families actually identified and ration cards issued to them by States/UT Governments, whichever is less. As per these estimates, the number of BPL families is 6.52 crore, which includes about 2.44 crore Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) families. Allocation of foodgrains to these 6.52 crore families, including AAY families, are made @ 35 kg per family per month.
The list of beneficiaries will be updated on the basis of Socio Economic Caste Census

(SECC), 2011 which is being carried out by the respective State/UT Governments The eligibility and entitlements of households in the country for different central government programmes and schemes will be determined after the SECC, 2011 survey results are available and have been analysed. The Union Ministry of Rural Development and the Planning Commission will consult the States,

Experts and Civil Society Organisations to arrive at a consensus on the methodology by the time the SECC, 2011 is completed. This methodology will seek to ensure that no poor or deprived household will be excluded from coverage under different government programmes and schemes. An Expert Committee will be appointed to ensure that this methodology is consistent with the provisions of the Food Security Bill.